

Chairman's chat

Taking positive steps towards a better Taranaki

Ka mihi nui ki a koutou katoa, greetings to you all.

As a Council we have been working hard to strengthen our relationships with iwi and while there is still a long way to go, I would like to acknowledge a significant step forward. The Council and eight Iwi Authorities recently put in place an agreement for the next three years that supports tangata whenua to respond to and participate in freshwater and other Council planning processes. I look forward to seeing the positive impact



this will have on the work we need to do as a region.

Meanwhile, the Local Government Commission has confirmed the representation arrangements for October's election, retaining 11 councillors including one from a new Taranaki Māori Constituency. It's good to have that certainty and I encourage anyone who believes they can contribute to think about standing.

As rural readers will be aware, the annual riparian plant distribution is fast approaching. You may have heard the Council has commissioned an

independent review of the Riparian Management Programme and how it takes into account the effects of adverse weather events. This programme has achieved what it set out to and farmers can rightly be proud. It is good practice to periodically review the work we do and whether anything could be improved.

Finally, with the peak of the Omicron outbreak seemingly behind us and New Zealand at Orange, it feels as if life is edging ever closer to a new normal. I would like to thank the Council staff who went the extra mile to ensure Council services remained largely unaffected throughout.

David MacLeod, Chair

Improving lifestyles

Have your say: What's important about freshwater?

As the Council develops the region's new Natural Resources Plan, the community is being invited to have a say.

The Council is working with the community, iwi and industry to find out what's important about how the region's freshwater is protected, managed and used, says Director Resource Management, Fred McLay.

"The Natural Resource Plan includes rules and limits on how freshwater is used, and it's really important that we hear from the community so that the rules give effect to what the community wants.

"Through workshops, hui and online forums, we'll be asking people to tell us about their vision for our rivers, lakes and streams. We'll also be asking for feedback on other things like what the targets and

limits should be to deliver on the community's vision."

In early April around 50 people representing the primary sector and commerce and industry attended workshops to share their views on what's important about freshwater.

In 2021, a group of enthusiastic people also attended a community meeting about their vision for freshwater, explains Mr McLay.

"What people care about is coming through loud and clear.

"Swimmability is important, as is freshwater that is clean, clear and fresh. People also want our freshwater to support biodiversity not only now, but for future generations."

The Council has generally positive relationships with community members, iwi

and industry through its existing environmental programmes and receives regular feedback on a range of issues.

"The freshwater engagement process aims to build on that as well as encouraging input from others who may not already interact with the Council."

Mr McLay encourages anyone interested in contributing to the conversation to register their interest at www.trc.govt.nz/have-your-say/.

Engagement with the community is a key feature of the Council's approach and part of the Government's 'Essential Freshwater' package, which introduces new rules and regulations aimed to stop further degradation of New Zealand's freshwater resources and improve water quality.

Taking Taranaki forward

Taranaki students connect with environment, each other

It was a busy first term for the Council's Education team, with one of many highlights being a collaboration between two schools. Working with Education Officer Dr Emily Roberts, Ōmata School students potted up seedlings from their school bush and gifted them to Lepperton School. The Lepperton tamariki cleared patches of tradescantia from the Tegal QEII Bush before planting the gifted seedlings (right).

Emily also worked with Waitara High School on this year's seagrass survey. Orapa Reef is home to Taranaki's largest seagrass meadow. Kārepo/seagrass provides valuable habitat to coastal birds, fish and invertebrates. It was awesome to have Nioka Behan-Kitto (Otaraua Hapu) and Vicky Dombroski (Te Ara Taiao O Whai-Tara) along to provide local cultural and historical perspective.

To find out more about our education programme email education@trc.govt.nz.



Around & about the region



Pest Bulletin a must-read

A heads-up for rural landowners that the next Pest Bulletin will arrive in your inbox in June. This quarterly email contains important updates on the self-help possum programme, Towards Predator-Free Taranaki and pest plants. Please take the time to read it as it replaces reminder letters. View the March edition at tinyurl.com/pest-bulletin

Bargain bus travel

Taranaki bus fares are half price until the end of June, as part of the Government's three-month reduction of public transport fares. The discount is automatically applied on the Citylink, Connector, Southlink and school bus services. That means travel from Hāwera to New Plymouth is just \$2.50 with a Bee Card, or \$3 cash. Trips within New Plymouth are \$1 with a Bee Card or \$1.50 cash. More at www.trc.govt.nz/busfares/.



Your Councillors

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Read the newsletter online:
www.trc.govt.nz/talking-taranaki/